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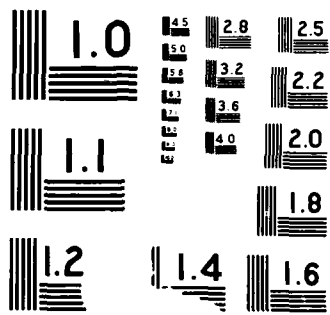
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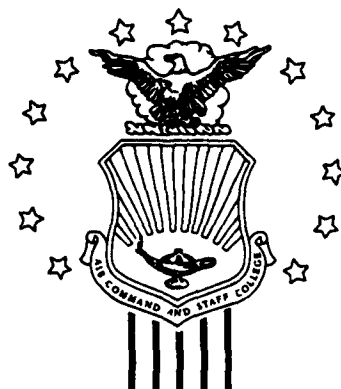
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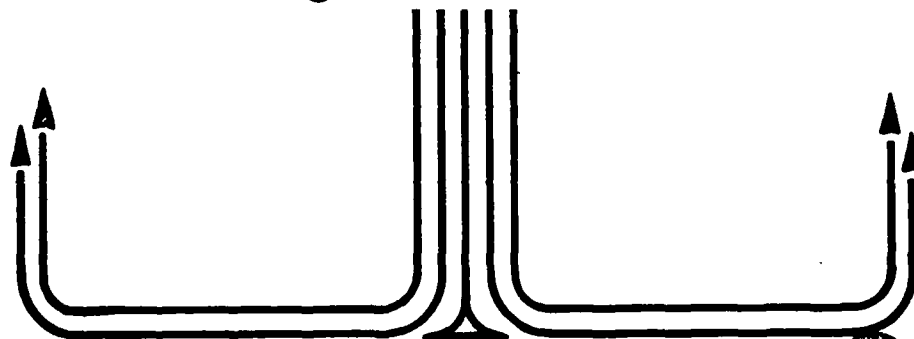
STUDENT REPORT

TRAINING APPROACHES IN AFLC PROCUREMENT

MR. THOMAS E. DORING

88-0765

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REPORT NUMBER 88-0765
TITLE TRAINING APPROACHES IN AFLC PROCUREMENT

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PREFACE

Learning takes time, and time costs money. Whenever change is introduced to a system, some level of learning is required. Large amounts of change generally necessitate more learning, and therefore require more time at a higher cost than smaller amounts of change. The purpose of this project is to recommend ways for the system (in this case, acquisition in the Air Force Logistics Command) to more easily adopt a large amount of policy change.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to those who helped in preparing this project: first, to his wife, Susan, and their children, Kelly and Steven, for the support and understanding they provided throughout this endeavor; also, Lt Col Mike Stewart, faculty advisor, for his advice and assistance.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mister Doring began his Federal civil service career as a contract negotiator at San Antonio Air Logistics Center in 1973. Over the next six years, he performed various contracting-related duties. His selection and subsequent training in the Air Force COPPER CAP training program provided an education in the other primary logistics disciplines (Comptroller, Distribution, Maintenance, Material Management). In 1979, he moved to Dayton, Ohio to become a staff member for the Deputy Chief of Staff/Contracting and Manufacturing, Headquarters, Air Force Logistics Command, located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. After four years as the senior procurement analyst in the Contracting Data Systems Division, he transferred to the Plans and Resources Division to work on manpower and budget issues. In 1985, he accepted his current assignment to a newly created position in the Logistics Contracting Policy Division. This job was created to analyze acquisition related legislative proposals for their potential impact on Air Force Logistics Command. His assessments are regularly provided to the AFLC Commander, and were even presented to the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management in 1985.

Mister Doring graduated from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Enterprise, and from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1979 with a Masters in Business Administration. In 1987, he was selected as one of five civilians to attend the Air Command and Staff College from individuals nominated throughout the Air Force.

Mister Doring is married to the former Susan Gold. They have two children, Kelly and Steven.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER

88-0765

AUTHOR(S) MR. THOMAS E. DORING

TITLE TRAINING APPROACHES IN AFLC PROCUREMENT

I. Problem: The Deputy Chief of Staff, Contracting and Manufacturing, Air Force Logistics Command, accomplishes necessary training of its personnel under normal conditions. However, no satisfactory approach is available for those circumstances which require providing a large amount of policy training to a large number of personnel within a short mandatory time period. Existing approaches cannot meet this requirement.

II. Objective: Recommend a possible approach for the training problem faced when a large amount of policy change must be provided to a large number of personnel within a short time.

III. Discussion of Analysis: Existing training approaches used by AFLC/PM can accommodate training for either small amounts of policy change to large audiences, or large amounts of policy change training for small, selective target audiences. Extensive time delays have been

CONTINUED

experienced when a large amount of policy change requires training of a large number of personnel. These time delays can be expressed in costs by examining the increased pipeline time needed for award of contractual actions.

IV. Findings: Existing approaches cannot be modified to meet the requirement.

V. Recommendations: The newly installed video teleconferencing network can be used to overcome the shortfalls associated with existing training approaches, and is not subject to the problems experienced with previous attempts to meet the requirement of many changes and large audiences.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to recommend way(s) to save time in implementing many policy changes. Learning takes time, and time costs money. In any large corporate structure whenever a policy change is injected into the system, a certain amount of time transpires before the new policy is assimilated into all facets of the corporation. Massive changes generally take longer to incorporate than do minor changes due to the span of control and the degree of reeducation. A minor change may only have a localized or limited application. This project examines if procurement personnel in the Air Force Logistics Command (AFLC) can be more effective in their capability to incorporate policy changes into the acquisition process. Specifically, recommendations for a more tailored training approach will be offered.

This report reviews the scope of responsibilities performed by AFLC procurement personnel, examining statistical data including AFLC sites; number of personnel; management structure; number of contracts issued; amount of dollars obligated; estimated costs involved in adding one more day to the pipeline for all AFLC due-in assets. This knowledge baseline provides the reader an understanding for the importance of the recommendations in the study. Other studies such as Procurement Leadtime: The Forgotten Factor (4:--) have been performed or are underway to discover ideas for reducing lead time throughout the entire spectrum of the acquisition system as it currently operates.

This report next examines how AFLC/PM currently handles training requirements. Because this approach is structured toward planned requirements, it cannot accommodate time sensitive changes for mass audiences. An examination of the training approaches employed by AFLC/PM to implement two fairly recent massive changes (the Federal Acquisition

Regulation {FAR} in 1984 and the Competition in Contracting Act {CICA} in 1985) follows, along with the problems, shortcomings, and successes associated with these efforts.

Following a discussion of some alternatives in Chapter Four, Conclusions and Recommendations are presented in the final chapter.

Chapter Two

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW OF AFLC/PM

Before the reader can understand the magnitude of the task facing AFLC/PM management when confronted with large statutory or executive policy mandates to be injected into the AFLC acquisition process, the reader must first comprehend the size and structure of the AFLC procurement operation. AFLC/PM headquarters, consisting of approximately one hundred personnel, is located at Wright-Patterson AFB, OH. Figure 1 (7:--) contains an organizational chart which illustrates the management structure of HQ AFLC/PM.

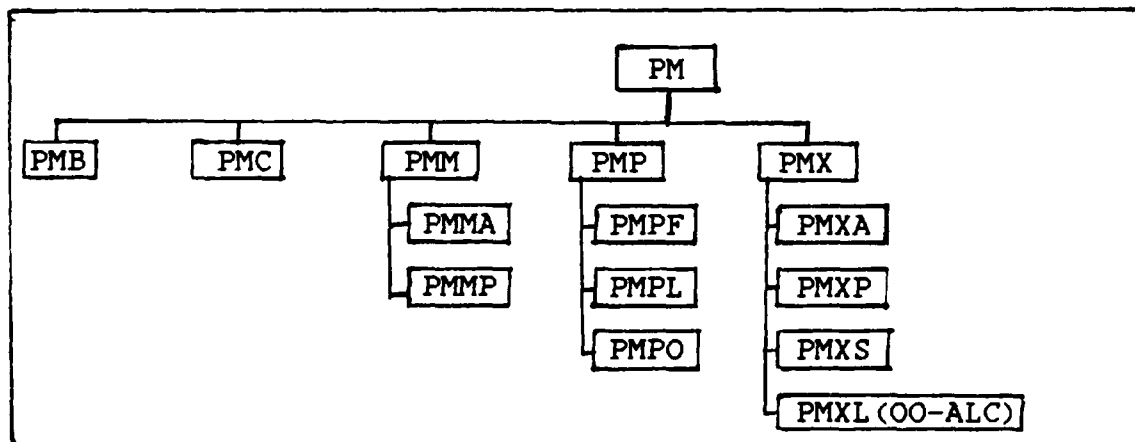


Figure 1. - AFLC/PM Organizational Chart

These personnel have many varied responsibilities, but a majority of them are policymakers on such diverse areas as data system planning and design; proper use of multiple-year contract instruments; formula and forward pricing agreement considerations; manpower requirements projection adjustment factors; Industrial Modernization Improvement Program.

There is no actual buying performed by headquarters personnel. The buying functions are performed by the following field activities: Sacramento ALC (SM-ALC), McClellan AFB, CA; Warner Robins ALC (WR-ALC), Robins AFB, GA; Aerospace Guidance and Metrology Center (AGMC), Newark Air Force Station, OH; Wright-Patterson Contracting Center (WPCC), Wright Patterson AFB, OH; Oklahoma City ALC (OC-ALC), Tinker AFB, OK; San Antonio ALC (SA-ALC), Kelly AFB, TX; Ogden ALC (OO-ALC), Hill AFB, UT. Table 1 displays these sites with the number of personnel allocated by HQ AFLC/PM to perform central contracting functions against the sites central contracting projected workload (16:--).

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Allocation</u>
AGMC	5
OC-ALC	591
OO-ALC	470
SA-ALC	766
SM-ALC	393
WR-ALC	626
WPCC	175

Table 1. - FY87 Central Contracting Manpower Allocation Summary

As shown in Table 1, there is quite a diverse dispersement of available manpower. These numbers do not reflect the additional personnel at each site performing base contracting functions. Although the headquarters staff has policy responsibility for base contracting, it cannot influence the allocation of personnel to accomplish the base contracting workloads. The base commander at each individual site exercises control over that allocation. Therefore, the statistics displayed specifically exclude base contracting contributions.

Although some variations have been authorized and do exist, Figure 2 reflects a 'typical' field activity organizational structure (8:--).

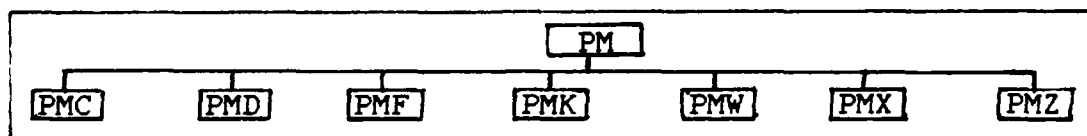


Figure 2. - Typical ALC/PM Organizational Chart

In FY87, AFLC issued approximately 360,000 contractual instruments, with combined obligations on these contracts totalling over \$10.5 billion (14:--). Assuming 251 workdays a year (365 less weekends and holidays), AFLC/PM averages more than 1,400 actions worth nearly \$42 million total each workday. In the author's opinion, this reflects a substantial workload, and provides some indication of the challenge involved in implementing changes, especially massive, time sensitive changes.

One final reason to minimize the time needed to incorporate changes into the system is that the cost involved in increasing the lead time for the total amount of due-in assets by one additional day is estimated at \$6.5 billion (14:--). This is the calculated one-time cost of adding one more day to the schedules on all of the due-in assets on contract for AFLC.

Based on the above data, the reader can draw three inferences about AFLC procurement. First, it is a large business. The total AFLC contract dollars, when compared to the 1986 sales of firms listed in Fortune Magazine's top 500 industrial companies, would rank 29th, displacing Goodyear Tire and Rubber (1:364). Second, timeliness is important because large costs can be incurred. Extending the procurement leadtime requires a larger budget commitment, without the added benefit of gaining additional supplies or services. Third, in addition to the time pressures for enacting changes, the problems associated with spatial barriers also exist. Spatial barriers of time and distance exist between HQ USAF, HQ AFLC, and the AFLC field activities.

In the next chapter, the methods AFLC currently uses to perform its training functions will be reviewed.

Chapter Three

AFLC/PM TRAINING APPROACHES

In the author's opinion, the current methods AFLC/PM uses to address normal training requirements appear to be adequate. In general, training requirements are identified, the quotas are requested and programmed, and the available training slots are filled. If out-of-cycle, that is, unprogrammed training is justified and funding is available, requests are processed to fulfill identified needs. Specific training programs are tailored in response to specific needs. After examining the existing programs, the reader will see that the specific need assessed in this paper cannot be satisfied by any of the existing programs or approaches.

Several years ago (December 1983), AFLC/PM conducted the first of what has become an annual training event for trainee buyers, either newly hired or newly promoted. Called PACER PRODUCE, the program initiates the new buyer personnel in each of the four required basic procurement courses: Defense Acquisition, Contract Price Analysis, Contract Law, Defense Negotiation Workshop. Initially, these courses were conducted prior to the students receiving any practical on-the-job training (OJT) experience. However, after the initial class of students, some field activities have modified the approach to provide simultaneous real world experience to complement the traditional classroom instruction. Notwithstanding the approach, the entry level buying personnel obtain their mandatory course workload in a timely fashion. The PACER PRODUCE program has been very well received by management, both within and outside of AFLC.

In addition to an annual program for new buying personnel, AFLC/PM also conducts a yearly training program for its senior managers. Each October, a week-long session is conducted in a combination lecture/seminar format. The upper echelon of managers from the field activities and the Headquarters live together at a conference center in Dayton, Ohio. During this period, the new fiscal year projection is

examined, and initiatives, problem areas, ideas, and potential solutions are exchanged. This enables all the AFLC/PM senior managers to start the fiscal year with a common, clear understanding of challenges and prioritized tasks for the year.

While AFLC/PM provides an annual training program for the new buying personnel and senior managers, other training opportunities are also exploited. AFLC/PM actively supports training programs run at the Air Force level. These include the COPPER CAP program for civilians, the Career Broadening program for military, and the Education With Industry (EWI) program for both civilians and military personnel. Because these programs are specialized in focus (the target audience is composed entirely of future managers), a much smaller and more selective target audience is involved.

All the previously discussed training approaches attempt to fulfill the demands of fairly small, selective audiences. They also each require some amount of time to plan and implement. To effect changes which necessitate reaching a large audience (for example, all buying and support personnel) within a short time period, none of the above approaches are adequate. These needs are currently met by such various methods as seminars conducted by Procuring Contracting Officers (PCO), BUYERGRAMS (notifications of updated clause availability as the new clauses are established in our solicitation and contract preparation system data bases), issuance of current policy interpretation direction and guidance, and lessons-learned guidance published as a result of reviews of protest files, audits or Inspector General reports, etc. Each of these methods is effective in providing small informational updates to large audiences. However, on those occasions where a massive amount of change must be parlayed to a large audience, normally within a mandatory and unreasonably short time frame, additional training methods must be employed. None of the approaches described above is acceptable for this tasking. The methods used for the selective, specialized audiences can accomodate large amounts of change and large audiences, but require extensive planning and lead time. The other approaches can accomodate large audiences with relatively short preparation time needed, but cannot provide large amounts of information (change). Two recent large scale changes in acquisition policy and procedures (the FAR in 1984, and PL 98-369 {CICA} in 1985)

required finding and using alternative methods. For each of these efforts, briefing teams comprised of HQ AFLC/PM analysts went to each of the field activities. For the FAR training, one team was formed and, preceding the federal-wide required implementation date, spent approximately one week at each site. All AFLC/PM personnel received the briefings which outlined all known changes and probable impacts. For the CICA training two teams were formed and each team went to alternate field activities. This time, in addition to all AFLC/PM personnel, the higher-level management in both the ALC/AC (Comptroller) and ALC/MM (Material Management) directorates were also briefed on the known changes and probable impacts.

Several problems were inherent in both of these endeavors. The mobility of the briefing teams, required to meet the mandatory implementation schedules imposed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the FAR and Congress for CICA, severely limited the opportunities for two-way discussions. Additionally, early issues raised could be addressed with subsequent audiences, but questions posed by later audiences (at the same or subsequent sites) could not be relayed back to previously briefed groups or sites. Finally, the briefers were hampered by incomplete knowledge of all details of the subject matter, a problem created by the Department of Defense's (DOD) refusal or inability to make all the changes within the imposed timetable. For example, FAR implementation was effected without the required new forms prescribed for use in all solicitations and contracts issued after the mandatory implementation date. The protest provisions contained in CICA were initially rejected by DOD until questions of Constitutional legality raised by the Department of Justice were resolved.

Notwithstanding these limitations, both efforts were relatively successful. The initial planning and development efforts of the AFLC/PM data laboratory in updating the software and the solicitation and contract clause data bases enabled each of AFLC's sites to load and test the new requirements levied by the changes prior to the actual implementation dates. Unfortunately, the massive amount of changes injected into the acquisition process by these events ensured that initial training would be insufficient, and additional training (for example, OJT or trial and error) would be necessary. Also, publication and

distribution of supplemental regulatory guidance required from the DOD and Air Force levels was late. This compounded the problems for follow-on training and extended the time needed for the users to assimilate all the new requirements.

Alternatives in the next chapter provide insight into how AFLC/PM can best overcome this problem of providing large amounts of training to massive audiences within a very short time period.

Chapter Four

ALTERNATIVES

Having examined both current training approaches and previous methods for integrating massive changes, a review of new alternatives is timely. This chapter identifies and explains five alternatives. Recommendations are saved for chapter five. These alternatives are not presented in any prioritized order.

One alternative is to do nothing. This alternative relies on existing approaches to cope with normal (programmable) training needs. This also presumes no massive changes for which there is a need to reach large audiences are forthcoming. This 'crapshoot' attitude ignores the function of Congress (to promote change via new legislation). Although there have been several suggestions by respected authorities to decelerate or stop legislating changes to acquisition, this issue has not been universally embraced by the legislators.

What may not be so obvious is to slow the pace of legislated changes in acquisition management. In the last two or three years there has been really thoroughgoing organizational policy and regulatory changes. And we probably need some time now to understand and assimilate the changes, and for the results to be assessed (13:82-83).

Indeed, AFLC/PM itself initiated a Legislative Agenda (desired changes to existing acquisition-related statutes are identified to Congressional staff members for their favorable consideration). This Legislative Agenda has also been reviewed and endorsed (with minor changes) by relevant offices in SAF/AQ, SAF/LL, and OSD. Although this alternative ignores the problem rather than attempting to fix it, one benefit of the 'do-nothing' alternative is that it requires no additional resources.

In opposition to doing nothing, several potential options can be considered. To become more proactive to change, a closer working relationship between AFLC/PM analysts and those in SAF/LL and SAF/AQ responsible for legislative proposals and analysis could be established. This alternative would require close interpersonal cooperation between the analysts to be successful, and is therefore entirely dependent on the personalities of the involved analysts.

Other approaches require encouraging and incorporating field activity involvement. This suggestion for field activity input and involvement into training updates is not a new, revolutionary idea. Field activity PCOs have a valuable perspective because of their daily interaction with the private sector, a viewpoint not shared by Headquarters staff personnel. Additionally, a prior survey of AFLC/PCOs indicated their desire to provide insight/input to the process (10:41). This proposal was also offered for consideration in an informal conversation with a current PCO (15:--). One other benefit of the field activity involvement is that a better appreciation for the impact(s) of the changes can be assessed.

AFLC/MM currently uses this approach. However, their use is limited in development. HQ AFLC/MM assigns subject areas to each field activity, and these sites develop OJT training programs for their assigned blocks of responsibility. This approach retains a centralized authority for the training material updates, but does it in a manner disbursed from the headquarters (9:--). However, the author believes this approach (as used by AFLC/MM) is only viable for small amounts of change within well-defined areas of expertise.

Of the approaches discussed in chapter three, a further examination of those current training approaches which can provide information to large audiences within short time periods is necessary. The problem which must be resolved with these approaches revolves around the need to provide large amounts of diverse information. The use of PCO-led seminars would undertake a two-tiered cadre training approach, which is impracticable and time-consuming. The use of BUYERGRAMS or policy letters would require reducing all changes to finite, written form. For a large amount of change, these approaches are also considered impractical.

One potential alternative for consideration is to adapt technology to the problem. Because AFLC/PM is currently in the second of a three-phased major data system replacement program, and the requirements baseline for the system has been firmly established in the contractor's developmental statement of work, additional requirements (for example, video capability) could not be easily incorporated into the current revision effort. An alternative system would be needed to meet this demand in the near-term (until the funding could be made available for the desired audio and/or video capability). Fortunately, AFLC has an existing audio and video teleconferencing network which could accomodate this approach with all field activities except AGMC(3:42).

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This paper examines whether a more effective training approach can be developed enabling AFLC/PM personnel to better incorporate large amounts of policy change into the acquisition process in a short time. Three constant factors must be addressed under this training approach: a large audience will always be involved; a large amount of information will always be involved; the amount of available time to accomplish the training and incorporate the changes under the other existing approaches is insufficient.

The author believes a combination of the available alternatives could provide the best approach. The foundation for the proposed approach requires using the existing video teleconferencing network.

The facilities are identically equipped with microphones, and color video cameras and monitors, which can also transmit graphics and videotaped material. This allows conference participants to use viewgraphs, 35mm slides, ordinary typewritten material, and videotapes during briefings.

And ... it's possible to videotape the proceedings. ... will eventually give AFLC the capability to link up with similar systems used by other branches of the armed forces and various Department of Defense agencies (3:42).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The author believes the AFLC video teleconferencing network is the foundation for the needed approach, as the

combination of audio and video media can be more effective for learning than any other single communication medium. Learning increases as the number of available related cues or stimuli increases (11:37). "Multichannel communications which combine words with related or relevant illustrations will provide the greatest gain because of the summation of cues between the channels" (11:37). Using the video teleconferencing network should be the principal avenue to achieve the objective set forth in this paper, as it is the only way to accommodate two-way communication among all involved users. However, this approach could be enhanced with the simultaneous adoption of two other alternatives: first, establishing a close working relationship between AFLC/PM analysts and those in SAF/AQ and SAF/LL; secondly, encouraging and incorporating field activity involvement. For practical purposes, field activity involvement would have to be limited to a few personnel. They should be selected by local management from the ALC/PM office responsible for acquisition policy on local issues (normally, the Procurement Committee) (8:1-2).

Adoption of these additional alternatives will provide several benefits. Earlier detection of potential problems for AFLC will be possible if SAF/AQ and SAF/LL analysts are kept apprised of AFLC concerns. Earlier detection provides more analysis and response time. Establishing a network with the field activities will enable a better impact assessment of potential changes, and may provide implementation alternatives which might go undetected by the headquarters staff.

Finally, establishing this network between SAF/AQ and SAF/LL, HQ AFLC/PM, and the PM field activities prior to the time when introduction of massive training is again necessary will provide a smoother transition because the principals in the video teleconferencing network infrastructure are already in place. That additional massive training will continue to be needed is assured, as recommendations for change continue to be suggested by such diverse and distinguished groups as the Democratic Leadership Council (6:--), the Logistics Management Institute (4:--), the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2:--), and the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management (12:--).

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